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News Release

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Expectations for 2006 Soybean Crop Shattered by Dry Weather

Expectations for this year's soybean crop in Delaware and Maryland have fallen significantly since August 1, due to the unusually dry weather experienced in the region during August. This is according to a survey of grain producers released on September 12 by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service and is based on September 1 crop conditions. The forecast for corn production remains unchanged. USDA also released an updated forecast for the potato crop. Potato production is now expected to top last year's production in Maryland, but will drop in Delaware.

Maryland: Maryland farmers now expect to harvest 33 bushels per acre of soybeans, down 20 percent from the 41 bushels per acre forecast in August. With 440,000 acres of soybeans expected to be harvested, total production is forecast at 14.5 million bushels, as compared with nearly 16 million bushels produced in 2005. Growers are also expected to produce 56.8 million bushels of corn, with fields averaging 142 bushels per acre. This forecast is unchanged from August 1 and compares favorably with the 54 million bushels produced in 2005. Potato production is expected to be up 11 percent from 2005, at 896,000 hundredweight of potatoes. Although some potato fields were lost during the late June storm, yields are expected to be better on remaining fields, at an average yield of 320 hundredweight per acre. This compares with an average yield of 260 hundredweight per acre in 2005.

Delaware: Farmers in Delaware now expect to harvest 28 bushels per acre of soybeans this fall, down 26 percent from the 38 bushels per acre forecast last month. This is still slightly more than the 26 bushels per acre harvested in 2005, when the region also experienced dry conditions in late summer. With 178,000 acres expected to be harvested statewide, total production is forecast at 5 million bushels. Grain producers are also expected to harvest 22.5 million bushels of corn, unchanged from August. Potato production is expected to plummet this year due to fields that were drowned out in late June. Only 2,100 acres of potatoes are now expected to be harvested, down 32 percent from 3,100 acres harvested in 2005. Average yield is also down. Producers expect to harvest 240 hundredweight of potatoes per acre, for a total production of 504,000 hundredweight. This is down 38% from the 806,000 hundredweight of potatoes harvested last year.

United States: Corn production is forecast at 11.1 billion bushels, up 1 percent from last month and fractionally above 2005. Based on conditions as of September 1, yields are expected to average 154.7 bushels per acre, up 2.5 bushels from August and 6.8 bushels from last year. If realized, yield and production would be the second largest on record, behind 2004. Forecast yields are higher than August across the northern Great Plains and western Corn Belt as moderate to heavy precipitation during the month improved soil moisture levels and crop conditions. Expected yields across the eastern Corn Belt are unchanged from last month. Farmers expect to harvest 71.8 million acres of corn for grain, down 250,000 acres from August and down 4 percent from 2005.

Soybean production is forecast at 3.09 billion bushels, up 6 percent from the August forecast and up slightly from the 2005 crop. If realized, this would be the second highest production on record. Based on September 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 41.8 bushels per acre, up 2.2 bushels from August but down 1.5 bushels from last year's record high yield. Compared with last month, yields are forecast higher across the Corn Belt and most of the northern and central Great Plains. Near or above normal moisture in those areas during August improved crop conditions. In contrast, yields are down or unchanged from the August 1 forecast across the Gulf Coast States and Atlantic Coast States, with the exception of South Carolina.

ACREAGE, YIELD AND PRODUCTION 2005 AND 2006

Commodity	Unit	Planted		Harvested		Average Yield		Production	
		2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
Maryland		1,000 Acres				1,000			
Corn ¹	ACR	470	480	----	----	----	----	----	----
Corn Grain	BU	----	----	400	400	135	142	54,000	56,800
Corn Silage	TON	----	----	65	----	17	----	1,105	----
Soybeans	BU	480	450	470	440	34	33	15,980	14,520
Winter Wheat	BU	155	200	140	130	66	67	9,240	8,710
Barley	BU	46	52	41	36	86	86	3,526	3,096
All Hay	TON	----	----	190	200	2.79	----	531	----
Alfalfa Hay	TON	----	----	40	40	3.90	----	156	----
Other Hay	TON	----	----	150	160	2.50	----	375	----
Apples	LBS	----	----	----	----	----	----	41,000	38,000
Peaches	TON	----	----	----	----	----	----	4.2	3.8
Potatoes, Summer	CWT	3.5	4.0	3.4	2.8	260	320	884	896
Delaware									
Corn ¹	ACR	160	165	----	----	----	----	----	----
Corn Grain	BU	----	----	154	155	143	145	22,022	22,475
Corn Silage	TON	----	----	5	----	19	----	95	----
Soybeans	BU	185	180	182	178	26	28	4,732	4,984
Winter Wheat	BU	52	48	51	47	70	65	3,570	3,055
Barley	BU	29	27	27	24	81	78	2,187	1,872
All Hay	TON	----	----	14	13	2.79	----	39	----
Alfalfa Hay	TON	----	----	5	4	3.60	----	18	----
Other Hay	TON	----	----	9	9	2.30	----	21	----
Potatoes, Summer	CWT	3.3	3.0	3.1	2.1	260	240	806	504
United States								1,000,000	
Corn ¹	ACR	81,759	79,366	----	----	----	----	----	----
Corn Grain	BU	----	----	75,107	71,841	148	155	11,112	11,114
Corn Silage	TON	----	----	5,920	----	18	----	106	----
Soybeans	BU	72,142	74,930	71,361	73,935	43	42	3,086	3,093
Wheat, Winter	BU	40,433	41,393	33,794	31,108	44	41	1,499	1,283
Barley	BU	3,875	3,496	3,269	2,990	65	61	212	183
All Hay	TON	----	----	61,649	62,697	2.44	2.27	151	142
Alfalfa Hay	TON	----	----	22,389	22,407	3.38	3.18	76	71
Other Hay	TON	----	----	39,260	40,290	1.91	1.77	75	71
Apples	LBS	----	----	----	----	----	----	9,865	9,620
Peaches	TON	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.18	1.05
Potatoes, Summer	CWT	53.4	59.4	51.4	54.8	342	342	17.6	18.7

¹ Acres planted for all purposes.